

The paragraph beginning at page 18, line 29, has been amended to read as follows:

FIGURE 12 schematically illustrates how a foodstuff portion 1100 may be cut to a desired thickness in accordance with the present invention. The apparatus 1101 illustrated in FIGURE 12 includes a first conveyor system 1102 for delivering foodstuff portions 1100 to the underside of a vacuum chamber 1104. The vacuum chamber is shown as including a housing 1106 in generally oblong shape having a rounded leading end portion 1107 overlying the conveyor 1102 which transitions to a substantially flat bottom section 1108 spaced above the upper rung of the belt 1110 of the conveyor. At approximately the end of the conveyor 1102 the vacuum chamber housing extends diagonally upwardly along section 1112 to a vertical end wall 1114 of the chamber. The top surface 1116 of the chamber housing 1106 is substantially flat. A belt 1118 is trained around the top 1116, left end 1107, flat bottom 1108 and diagonal 1112 sections of the vacuum chamber housing, as well as around a drive pulley 1113 positioned outwardly adjacent the end wall 1114 of the chamber housing. The drive pulley is mounted to the wall 1114 by a bracket 1122. The drive pulley can be driven by numerous methods, for instance by an electric motor, hydraulic motor or otherwise.

In the Abstract:

At page 23, please replace the "Abstract of the Disclosure" section with the attached new abstract in accordance with CFR 1.72(b).

LAW OFFICES OF
CHRISTENSEN O'CONNOR JOHNSON KINDNESS^{LLC}
1420 Fifth Avenue
Suite 2800
Seattle, Washington 98101
206.682.8100